

Man loses leg after ambush in Mozambique

ONE of two ambushed and injured South African truck drivers — rescued from Mozambique in a light aircraft which had been chartered by a colleague on Sunday — has lost his leg due to gunshot wounds.

Dr J J Scheepers, medical superintendent of the Rob Ferreira Hospital in Nelspruit, said Mr Joe Odendaal's leg had to be amputated during surgery.

Mr Odendaal and Mr Hendrik Fourie, both single (37), and from Benoni, were in stable condition,

but he expected them to remain in hospital for at least another week, Dr Scheepers said.

The aircraft rescue was carried out by their friend and colleague, Mr Louis van Schalkwyk, owner of L. L. Transport in Benoni.

The two men were driving an articulated truck with two loaded containers to Maputo when they were ambushed twice on Wednesday near Xai Xai, allegedly by men with AK-47 military assault rifles.

The men refused to stop and drove their heavy truck through both ambushes. During the second ambush, they were fired at from behind. Mr Odendaal was shot in the right leg and

Mr Fourie in an ankle.

They continued driving despite their injuries and only stopped at the nearest "town" 20 km away.

They spent two days in the bush before being found by a Frelimo patrol and taken to a Maputo hospital.

Both men had been listed as critical by Maputo doctors when they were contacted by Mr Van Schalkwyk.

When he arrived in Maputo on Sunday afternoon, his friends were in an appalling state, he said.

Mr Van Schalkwyk arranged with the pilot of a 4-seater aircraft in Nelspruit to take them to the Rob Ferreira Hospital that afternoon — Sapa.